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Don't get Burned when Purchasing Firewood



Autumn is upon us, bringing a change in the color of the foliage and a change in the weather. As Colorado consumers prepare for another cold winter, many will reduce their home heating costs by burning firewood. Consequently, consumer purchases of firewood will increase statewide.

The Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) recommends that consumers purchase firewood from a reputable dealer. Nick Brechun, Program Administrator for CDA's Measurement Standards Program, advises that when consumers purchase firewood in bulk, they should obtain the seller's name and business address. Bulk firewood sellers in Colorado must provide a receipt with this information as well as the price, amount, and type of wood.

When firewood is sold in bulk, the appropriate method of sale is by the cord or fractional cord. A cord consists of a neatly stacked volume of wood that equals 128 cubic feet. For example, one cord equals a stack of wood that is 4 feet wide by 4 feet high by 8 feet long. Brechun cautions consumers to be aware that in Colorado, "firewood cannot be sold using terms such as truckload, face cord, rick, fireplace cord or pile." Consumers should report to the CDA Measurement Standards Program any sellers that use these terms to sell firewood.

Bundled firewood is commonly seen at grocery and convenience stores. The required method of sale for bundles is by the cubic foot. The actual amount of wood must meet the quantity declaration. Bundles must be properly labeled with net volume, wood type, and responsible party contact information (seller's name and address). CDA inspectors verify labeling compliance at retail locations throughout Colorado.

The CDA Division of Inspection and Consumer Services has 12 inspectors that investigate complaints involving misrepresentation or mislabeling of firewood. Brechun states, "Consumers can help ensure they get what they pay for by becoming informed about the product and the business selling the product."

A list of firewood suppliers can be found on CDA's website under "Fuel Wood" in the Forest Products section of the [Colorado Food and Agricultural Directory](#).

CDA also warns that transporting firewood can spread insects and diseases that kill trees. CDA participates in the [Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey \(CAPS\)](#) program which involves the early detection of exotic pests that threaten Colorado's agriculture and environment. These pests may be found on firewood. For more information on how you can help protect Colorado's forests click on the "Hot Topics: Buy It Where You Burn It!" link on the CAPS website listed above.

For questions, or for help in disputes regarding the sale of firewood, contact Nick Brechun, Measurement Standards Program Administrator at (303) 867-9232 or email Nick.Brechun@ag.state.co.us.